

*In the dark we hear a car ignition turn on, and then a horrible crash. Bangs and booms and wood splintering. When the noise is very loud, it stops suddenly and the lights come up on Daisy Werthan's living room, or a portion thereof. Daisy, age 72, is wearing a summer dress and high heeled shoes. Her hair, her clothes, her walk, everything about her suggests bristle and feist and high energy. She appears to be in excellent health. Her son, Boolie Werthan 40, is a businessman, Junior Chamber of Commerce style. He has a strong capable air. The Werthans are Jewish, but they have strong Atlanta accents.*

DAISY. No!

BOOLIE. Mama!

DAISY. No!

BOOLE. Mama!

DAISY. I said no, Boolie, and that's the end of it.

BOOLIE. It's a miracle you're not laying in Emory Hospital-- or decked out at the funeral home. Look at you! You didn't even break your glasses.

DAISY. It was the car's fault.

BOOLIE. Mama, the car didn't just back over the driveway and land on the Pollard's garage all by itself. You had it in the wrong gear.

DAISY. I did not!

BOOLIE. You put it in reverse instead of drive. The police report shows that.

DAISY. You should have let me keep my La Salle.

BOOLIE. Your La Salle was eight years old.

DAISY. I don't care. It never would have behaved this way. And you know it.

BOOLIE. Mama, cars, don't behave. They are behaved upon. The fact is you, all by yourself, demolished that Packard.

DAISY. Think what you want. I know the truth.

BOOLIE. The truth is you shouldn't be allowed to drive a car any more.

DAISY. No.

BOOLIE. Mama, we are just going to have to hire somebody to drive you.

DAISY. No we are not. This is my business.

BOOLIE. Your insurance policy is written so that they are going to have to give you a brand new car.

DAISY. Not another Packard, I hope.

BOOLIE. Lord Almighty! Don't you see what I'm saying?

DAISY. Quit talking so ugly to your mother.

BOOLIE. Mama, you are seventy-two years old and you just cost the insurance company twenty-seven hundred dollars. You are a terrible risk. Nobody is going to issue you a policy after this.

DAISY. You're just saying that to be hateful.

BOOLIE. O.K. Yes. Yes, I am. I'm making it all up. Every insurance company in America is lined up in the driveway waving their fountain pens and falling all over themselves to get you to sign on. Everybody wants Daisy Werthan, the only woman in the history of driving to demolish a three week old Packard, a two car garage and free standing tool shed in one fell swoop!

DAISY. You talk so foolish sometimes, Boolie.

BOOLIE. And even if you could get a policy somewhere, it wouldn't be safe. I'd worry all the time. Look at how many of you friends have men to drive them. Miss Ida Jacobs, Miss Ethel Hess, Aunt Nonie---

DAISY. They're all rich.

BOOLIE. Daddy left you plenty enough for this. I'll do the interviewing at the plant. Oscar in the freight elevator knows every colored man in Atlanta worth talking about. I'm sure in two weeks time I can find you somebody perfectly--

DAISY. No!

BOOLIE. You won't even have to do anything, Mama. I told you. I'll do all the interviewing, all the reference checking, all the--

DAISY. No. Now stop running your mouth~ I am seventy-two years old as you so gallantly remind me and I am a widow,

but unless they rewrote the Constitution and didn't tell me, I still have rights. And one of my rights is the right to invite who I want—not who you want—into my house. You do accept the fact that this is my house? What I do not want—and absolutely will not have is some—(*She gropes for a bad enough word.*) some chauffeur sitting in my kitchen, gobbling my food, running up my phone bill. Oh, I hate all that in my house!

BOOLIE. You have Idella.

DAISY. Idella is different She's been coming to me three times a week since you were in the eighth grade and we know how to stay out of each other's way. And even so there are nicks and chips in most of my wedding china and I've seen her throw silver forks in the garbage more than once.

BOOLIE. Do you think Idella has a vendetta against your silverware?

DAISY. Stop being sassy. You know what I mean. I was brought up to do for myself. On Forsyth Street we couldn't afford them and we did for ourselves. That's still the best way, if you ask me

BOOLIE. Them! You sound like Governor Talmadge.

DAISY. Why, Boolie! What a thing to say! I'm not prejudiced! Aren't you ashamed?

BOOLIE. I've got to go home. Florine'll be having a fit.

DAISY. Y'all must have plans tonight.

BOOLIE. Going to the Ansleys for a dinner party.

DAISY. I see.

BOOLIE. You see what?

DAISY. The Ansleys. I'm sure Florine bought another new dress. This is her idea of heaven on earth, isn't it?

BOOLIE. What?

DAISY. Socializing with Episcopalians.

BOOLIE. You're a doodle, Mama. I guess Aunt Nonie can run you anywhere you need to go for the time being.

DAISY. I'll be fine.

BOOLIE. I'll stop by tomorrow evening.

DAISY. How do you know I'll be here? I'm certainly not dependent on you for company.

BOOLIE. Fine. I'll call first. And I still intend to interview colored men.

DAISY. No!

BOOLIE. Mama!

DAISY. (*Singing to end discussion*)

After the ball is over.  
After the break of morn  
After the dancers leaving  
After the stars are gone  
Many a heart is aching  
If you could read them all--